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IMMORTAL SOUL



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HOLY BLOOD, ALETHEIAN, AJALON, PALE HORSE
SEVENTH ANGEL, KOHLLAPSE, PINKEYE D'GEKKO
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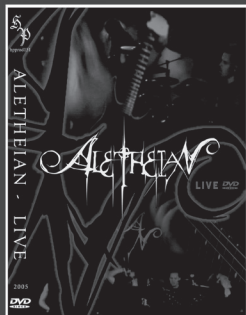
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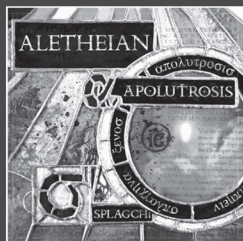
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HEAVEN'S METAL

Christians In A Band? Or a "Christian band?"

After the amazing 4-page spread feature article in the Sep/Oct issue of HM Magazine (don't believe the lie that HM isn't about metal anymore), I expected nothing but positive feedback. Little did I expect to hear from the label that the most prominent band featured in the article was on. I thought they'd be elated over that awesome photo spread... But the label was concerned about how the band might be perceived in Europe's metal circles. I can understand, because many music fans will see a label like "Christian" and immediately turn away. That is a challenge, and the fact that we have "walls" between what's called "secular" and what's called "Christian" (or "sacred") has its own problems. Nevertheless, we have a scene that is alive even amidst the changes. There is surely "room" in the body of Christ for many different expressions. It just gets weird when people try to define or un-define a label like "Christian." We're a messed up people. Speaking of mistakes, the awesome Stryper article in the last issue (still available for a limited time as a back issue) was falsely attributed to the wrong writer. Let it be known that Ed Hellig wrote that wonderful piece. My mistake. My apologies.

Grace and Peace,



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In these evil times we will rise!



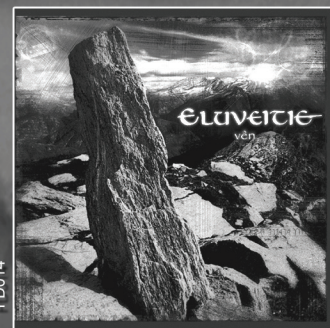
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METAL TRACKS

Hard-news-for-metal-heads



Neon Cross

Give us a brief update on Neon Cross. I'm told that you guys have stayed somewhat active over the past few years, playing the occasional show. Please give us some details.

Don Webster: We have been active since the release of *Torn* in 1995. We have been playing shows locally and driving out of state here and there. We have done a lot of church gigs and play a mixture of Neon Cross songs as well as worship music. We are also working with local youth pastors setting up concerts and festivals. We will be playing more dates out though out the US in 2006.

What are the current plans for the band, in terms of recording something?

DW: I built a recording studio in my home and we are working on a mixture of new songs and songs that we had written back in 1988 that we had planned on releasing on our follow-up to the self-titled CD. We did an internet release of one of those songs, "You're the One," to promote the "Up From the Ashes" show. We are working on finishing that CD in later 2005 or early 2006.

Briefly go over the band's history, from the beginning, through any rough times, personnel changes, the re-birth, and whatnot. Elaborate on any major themes that would describe any of these specific "eras" of the band.

DW: The band was started in 1983 by three high school friends. Mike Betts, Mitch Kent and me. We had experimented with music and in 1984 Neon Cross was a full band with Dave Reeves on vocals. Mitch left the band in 1987 and Ed Ott was recruited from roadie to bass player. That line-up existed until 1989. Dave was going through some rough personal times and decided to leave the band. In 1995, Mike Betts had already started Rugged Records and asked if Dave and I would be interested in recording. That was the start of the *Torn* line-up. Dave and I started production on *Torn*. At that time; I was not listening to or playing heavy metal at all. In fact, I was not involved in any type of band or music; so when we started working on *Torn*, I did not feel comfortable writing heavy metal. We decided we would write from our hearts and do the music that sounded good to us as a band. We knew a lot of our fans would not like this direction, but we had to do music that we believed in. To do a CD of re-hashed 80's metal in 1995 would have been a worse decision and, looking on it now, I can see that we gained more new fans from *Torn*. It also opened up opportunities for us that we did not have before. We were playing in clubs that heavy metal bands were not and this enabled us to continue our ministry in that time frame. In 1997 Troy Woody (drummer) needed to go back home to take care of family matters and Terry Russell joined. This combination has really worked well for Neon Cross, as the 80's metal thing seems to be gaining interest. [cont'd on next page]

News bullets

Petra recorded a final CD before a live audience at The W in Franklin, Tenn. on 10/4. *Petra Farewell* will be released 11/22 and will feature Petra classics, worship favorites, and guest appearances by former band members Greg X. Volz and John Lawry. The show was also videotaped and may be released on DVD in the future. Fans will be relieved that Petra will tour Canada and the US before "calling it quits."

According to **Stryper's** website, if you bought the new Stryper disc soon after its Aug 16 release date, you probably have one of the rarest CDs in Stryper history. *Reborn* initially shipped with the song list in the wrong order on the CD disc. The back of the CD states the order as: 7-"If I Die," 8-"Wait For You," 9-"Rain." This is the correct order as it was intended to be released. However, the music order on these rare discs is actually: 7-"Wait For You," 8-"Rain," 9-"If I Die." The distributor soon after the initial release remanufactured the CD with the songs in the correct order on the disc. Stryper is currently touring the U.S.

Sympathy is now working on their next release. Drummer **Jim Austin** (Into Eternity) joins **Jeff Lewis** (Mortification), as a recent addition to the band.

Consecrator will enter Bombworks studio in late September, and the disc will include previously unreleased material from the 90's as well as new material. **John Hall** will replace **Glenn Johnson** as lead vocalist. His voice is described as "brutal." The band regrets that **Ashley Lawhon** will not be doing percussion on the new CD due to the long distance between he and the band (TN and TX). The band is hoping he will rejoin on a new 2006 album. **Jason Byas** will fill in this time around. The band requests prayers and to get the word out that the new Consecrator CD will soon be out.

Zao will tour the US this fall. The band is releasing their first DVD, *Zao: The Lesser Lights Of Heaven* in October. The two-disc set includes a two hour-plus documentary with new interviews, live and behind-the-scenes footage, hidden extras, and two full live sets. Following the DVD 's release, the band will begin work on a new album due out in 2006.

Jet Circus is beginning work on a re-mastered version of *Step On It*. Both cover songs recorded for different markets will be on this album as well as two previously unreleased songs. There is a rare video on the CD for "Victory Dance." Planned release is 12/05. There are plans to shoot a video for "Look At Death Now." The band's lead singer, **Ez Gomér**, will sing lead vocals and play bass for Australian Trance Goth project **Templar** on the song "Witch Hunt."

Synnöve is currently writing new material for their next studio effort, a self-titled 29-minute EP due out in October. The band was formed by **Brad Bessel** (Virgin Black) and was recently "picked up" by Soundmass.



and more Neon Cross...

Why does Neon Cross exist in 2005? What has kept you guys going?

DW: You know, just recently having had a discussion with one of the other guys about how Neon Cross cycles through a predictable pattern of activities I was set to thinking about why Neon Cross has continued to exist and perform over all these years regardless of our popularity or even the level of activity. Dave and I have often joked how Neon Cross never breaks up, we just go on hiatus sometimes.

DW: However this might sound, the key thing for Neon Cross from the very beginning was that we wanted to serve the Lord. We wanted to be available for use whenever the Lord might want to use us. Being "Rock Stars" has always been fun anytime we were at that level of popularity, but that was never the goal. If/when the band fell out of popularity that didn't mark the end of the band, just the end of an era.

DW: Also, Neon Cross has never been about chasing trends. We all know what we like and sometimes we are, like most of the listening public, totally into whatever the "new sound" is, so we'll compose music in that genre. But very often what's really hip at the time doesn't interest us at all and we're not about to become something we're not in some vain effort to obtain a greater amount of popularity.

What do you think about the music scene in general when you look around? What are some trends that please you? What are some that turn you off?

DW: I'm extremely encouraged to see so many Christian bands making it into the mainstream and even the bands that aren't able to make that jump seem to be doing way better than any of the 80's bands.

DW: Some things will never change, though. We're still talking about human beings and all their failings. Nothing is quite so disheartening as finding out someone has denounced their faith or announced that they're gay or been caught cheating on their spouse. And because the nature of the business is so public we all bare the black eyes and bruises as the body of Christ.

What's a short list of essential, must-own metal or hard rock albums?

DW: I think the bands from the early 80's are some of the must-haves for collectors. This is where the heavy metal thing started and this sets the playing field for the future. Bloodgood, Barren Cross, Stryper, and so many more.

Anything else you'd like to add?

DW: We want to thank all the fans that have supported Neon Cross through the years. We also want to thank you, Doug, for this interview. God Bless.

The Showdown will headline *The Southern Thunder Tour* 10/14-11/19. **Chasing Victory**, who just released their debut, *I Call This Abandonment* as well as new phenom **Maylene and The Sons Of Disaster** (debut release due 10/25) will join them. The Showdown started work on a new album, which will be recorded 1/06 and released in late spring/early summer.

Guardian is playing a 5-song acoustic set in English and Spanish at The Factory in Franklin, TN 10/29. This will be the first time all 4 band members have played together in months, if not years. **Jamie Rowe**, the band's lead singer, wrote 4 praise and worship songs that he hopes to record soon.

Metal bands respond to the ill-effects of Hurricane Katrina: **39 Lashes** held a benefit concert and raised about \$1,000; **Gray Lines of Perfection** has a Red Cross link on their purevolume website as does **Stryper**. **Tourniquet**, who has a "soft spot" for domestic and wild animals effected by Katrina, donated 50% of their merchandise sales to the Humane Society, who is actively involved in saving effected animals.

Tourniquet's *Crawl to China* is once again available after 3 years of being out-of-stock. The band planned to reissue *Crawl* in double-disc format but has scrapped the idea for now due to high costs for the project.

Bride is working on a new album that promises to contain extreme metal and a theatrical flair. **Dale** and **Troy** have over 30 songs. In addition to playing drums, **Alex**, Dale's oldest son, will possibly contribute piano and songwriting on this disc. There is a great possibility that **Tim Bushong** (Lovewar, Channelsurfers)" who previously worked on Bride's CD *The Jesus Experience* will record and engineer this disc. The band may play in Mexico City in November and a tour the east coast in January. Bride has no projected release date but will keep their website bridepub.com updated.

Rise Up is the most recent disc by **Hovland**. "This Is Love" is the first single from *Rise Up* and was re-released in Europe on a secular compilation CD called *Melodic Rock is Back Vol. 7*. The band has enjoyed airplay in heavy secular radio stations in Germany as well. Hovland is currently working on a 4-song EP scheduled for release 1/06. **Mark Welling (Bloodgood)** may do all of the drum work on the project. This unique husband and wife team lead worship every week in the church they pastor in Spokane, WA, and they minister at other churches and conferences a few times a month. Their worship services sound like the CD, but they do a variation of styles. The band does perform, but Mark Hovland states, "God hasn't called either one of us (he or his wife, Shannon) to be "rock stars," but ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Check out this unique husband and wife team at hovlandrocks.com.

Global Warning was picked up by a record label. They hope to do a video shoot to promote the *Enemy Within* CD, which the record label will allow them to continue to sell at a fixed number on their website until the record label distributes it.

Salem Hill will release *Mimi's Magic Moment* officially 11/15, but you can receive the disc after 10/15 by pre-ordering it, and get all 4 band member's signatures.

To quote the **Sinai Beach** website, "We are very excited to announce our new members: **Daniel Barachchikov** formerly from Killing Theory, and **Sean Durham** previously part of Falling Cycle."

METAL TRACKS

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Larry Farkas with Holy Soldier | Scott Waters

Up From The Ashes

The fine folks at Roxx Productions pulled off a great show with *Up From The Ashes*, which sort of started out as a "rain date" for the cancelled *Beyond The Mountain* festival. Early in the morning people from Europe and parts of the Midwest were present and ready to rock. **Brandon** started things off early with some acoustic-based rock ballads that had the air of solid pro songwriting, but it didn't rock the small metal-thirsty crowd. **Tykkus** came on shortly after and took care of that. They play a very power metal type of music, and match it with lots of black and leather imagery. The frontman is very theatrical and all over the place, while their guitarist is also a good, smiling showman. **Laudamus** reminded me of Soldier with vocalist **Peter Stenlund**'s Rik Emmet style high-end vocal delivery. The songs were melodic, fun rockers, which meant for a good time. **Once Dead** came out and slammed through nothing but hits, and (judging by their DVD and last summer's Cornerstone set) had to be their best performance since getting back together. **Scott Waters** helped the band achieve an almost "close-your-eyes-and-you-can't-tell-the-difference" sound, and **Jim Chaffin**'s drumming really drove the songs. Having **Larry Farkas** around to nail his wailing leads with those fluid string bending notes was just awesome. To make the great set even more special, "silent" founding songwriter, **Glen Rodgers**, came out after the fourth song and jammed with the band for the rest of the set. They absolutely killed on songs like "Human Sacrifice" and "Beheaded." **Rivera-Bomma** started with a loud and beautiful keyboard intro and then **Rod** "I'm Ritchie Blackmore & Yngwie Malmsteen's monster child" **Rivera** comes out with smooth shredding. **Johnny Bomma**'s theater-experience makes his performance very expressive. Only a campy extended version of "I Just Came To Praise The Lord" took the band in a different direction than the operatic melodic metal. **Seven System** came out very heavy and refreshing. Once you got past the "I've-heard-this-before-with-POD-and-Project" realization and just enjoyed it, you realized that these guys really deliver the power. It was good. The singer is borderline believable as the serious tough guy, but almost too boyish and happy to believe it. **Ultimatum** played some fantastic metal riffage of the chugga-chutt variety. **Steven Patrick** used one of the set breaks to film a video, complete with a Harley, an all-girl band, three drunk amigos, and a hotline phone to Hell. It was vintage Alice Cooper – both lyrically, visually, and musically. It was quite brilliant. **Neon Cross** played a pretty heavy set, which started off with their version of "Leaning On The Everlasting Arms." Hearing them tear through "Son Of God" was great. Before **Holy Soldier** played (and persevered through major sound and power problems), I had forgotten how great and world class their songs were. When the sound system finally kicked into gear, you could hear how great everyone was playing. Steven Patrick is a natural frontman, who can actually get away with the Robert Plant moves. His talking during the sound problems made the whole thing seem providential. **Terry Russell**'s infectious and in-your-face enthusiasm got him an ovation after a great drum solo. During their cover of "Gimme Shelter," the background vocalist gave me real goosebumps with her great voice. The band ended with original guitarist Larry Farkas joining them for a second encore of "Rock & Roll." If something more from Holy Soldier comes of this one-off gig, it's probably guaranteed to sound great. [DV]

[nothin' but] News bullets

Audiovision fans may yearn a new release, but **Christian Rivel**'s main priorities are **Narnia** and **Divinefire**. "I am very happy that I have fulfilled so many musical dreams and that God is using them in a powerful way. I lay my future and my coming releases in His hands but it is really exciting..." Divinefire will soon kickoff its first tour ever in Japan.

Abandon opened for **Stryper** in Mt. Clemens, Michigan 10/1. The band is currently working on their 2nd full-length CD, which has 14 tunes. This melodic metal group is hoping to finish recording before 10/31 with a CD Release party sometime in November. Previous discs include: *Strength*, and *World Of Gray* and *Project: Unreality*. For more info, visit abandonmetal.com.

Upcoming releases: **Flagship** *Maiden Voyage* 10/17 (guitar solo by **Kerry Livgren**); **Narnia** *Enter the Gate* Feb/Mar 2006; **Grimmark** – solo project of **Carl Johan Grimmark** (Narnia) autumn 2006; **Majestic Vanguard** *Beyond the Moon* 10/17; **Essence of Sorrow** – solo release of **Jani Stefanovic** (Divinefire). **Divinefire** *Hero* 11/21 (new version of Queen's "The Show Must Go On"); **Project 86** *And The Rest Will Follow* 9/27 and a DVD. **Rivera/Bomma** will finally release *I Am God* 11/7; **Liberty n Justice** early 2006 – Stephen Pearcy (Ratt) is a newly confirmed singer for the disc; **King's X** *Ogre Tunes* 9/27, tour kicks off 10/25; **Frank Hart** (Atomic Opera) will release a solo disc, *Human Liturgy* 11/12; **Immortal Souls** *Once Upon A Time In The North* (2 CD limited digipak) is out; *Holy Hell*, by **Rob Rock**, was released 9/20 in the U.S. and 9/22 in Japan. The Japanese release includes bonus tracks "Ride the Wind" and "Lost In A World." **Venia** *In Our Weakness* (9/18); **Virgin Black** just finished recording songs with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, and the disc will be out early 2006; **Deliverance** *River Disturbance* (2 bonus tracks); **Lust Control** *We Are Not Ashamed* (18 bonus tracks); new albums by **Seventh Power** and **Final Axe** (both with **Robert Sweet** on drums) 10/18: **Whitecross** *Unveiled*; **Six Feet Deep** *Struggle and The Road Less Traveled*; **Stairway No Rest**, *No Mercy* (includes a bonus track); **Lucid Broken**, and self-titled; **Heaven's Rage** (which eventually became *Lucid Temporary*); and *The Great Divide* by **Scott Stapp** (Creed) will be released 11/22.

Beyond The Mountain has been cancelled yet again, with no plans for rescheduling. Organizers promise a refund for anyone who purchased advanced tickets.

Some outstanding "honorable mentions" that you're likely to see additional press on in future editions of Heaven's Metal are: **Totalisti**'s *Slave To None* (on Magna Carta); the second installment of *CPR* (Vol. 2) on Threshing Floor Records; **Evroklidon**'s *The Flame of Sodom* (Bombworks); **Walk The Sky**; *Every Knee Shall Bow* by **Tortured Conscience**; **Three's** *The Radio Hits*; *Dogs of Antichrist* by **Demoniciduth**; *Lightmaker* by **Heartcry** (Rivel); *Theocracy* (Metalages); *A Matter Of Time* by **Amos**; *The Beginning* by **Illuminandi**; *Unlimited Love* by **Laudamus**; the *Oz Mosh 2005* compilation by Soundmass.com; **Coriolis** (PsychoAcoustix); and a novel written by **Saint's Josh Kramer** – *Nicolas The Legend*.



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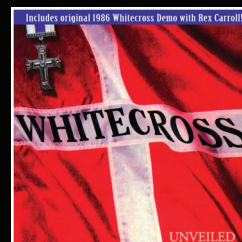
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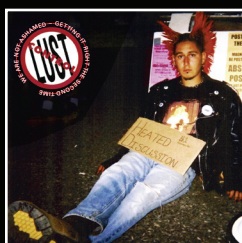
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IMMORTAL SOULS | A DECADE

INTERVIEW BY CHRIS BECK



*From the doom-influenced *Reflections of Doom* demo to the black metal of *Divine Wintertime* to the melodic death metal found on the more recent albums *Under the Northern Sky* and *Ice Upon the Night*, the music of Immortal Souls has gone through many changes, yet the band has always remained at the forefront of the extreme metal genre. Simply put, this is because the band writes good songs—songs that, though the music is brutal and the lyrics sorrowful, create a melody that carries the listener to the victorious end. As the metaphorically-driven lyrics tell their story, there in the background is the melody, aligning with the words being sung one moment and clashing with them the next,*

haunting the memory of the listener even after the song has ended.

*Though the time has passed quickly, Immortal Souls has been creating music for ten years now. To commemorate this, the band recently released the 2 CD compilation *Once Upon a Time in the North*, which includes all the songs from the hard-to-find *Reflections of Doom* demo and the *Divine Wintertime* EP, the album *Under the Northern Sky*, as well as a couple newly recorded songs. Heaven's Metal recently caught up with lead singer A. Sarkioja to discuss the new album and what the future holds for the band.*

Over time, the band's musical style has changed from doom-influenced metal to black metal to melodic death metal. Has this change been intentional, or has it been a natural progression as the band's songwriting has matured?

A. Sarkioja: We have always made the kind of music we love at the time, so the progress has been quite natural for us. There is the tone beneath that is the same, unchanged, the feeling that we provide, still as the style

the job we love to do.

Many of your lyrics often refer to snow and its physical qualities – beautiful, peaceful, cold. These lyrics can also be interpreted in a spiritual manner. Why focus so much on one theme to convey meaning in your songs?

I think without these winter topics there wouldn't be the music either. Text urges the music and music makes the text roll. It is my way of doing this and I don't see why or even

Do you think you will ever tour in the U.S.?

We will. It was close to happening already, but I am confident about it. Our U.S. sales have been good and we have a lot of contacts there, so there's nothing stopping us! We have made several European tours now, so a tour in the U.S. would be our next thing.

What bands have influenced the music of Immortal Souls?

"We have always made the kind of music we love at the time, so the progress has been quite natural for us."

changes. I would love to try to make some totally different things style-wise in the future, without forgetting the basics.

Why did you decide to release *Once Upon A Time In The North*, a 2 CD set, which contains only two new songs while the rest of the songs are from albums already released by the band?

The old releases are all sold out. The demand for them gave us the idea of making them available remastered with bonus tracks. The idea was to make a 1 CD set, but Fear Dark wanted to put the first album as a 2nd CD on it, too. The set is a great digipak, with a reasonable price, a real treat for fans.

What is the Christian metal scene like in Finland today? Is the scene better than it was five or ten years ago?

I think the quality and musical standards of the metal scene in Finland altogether is on a much higher level these days; there are a lot of young promising bands and a will to make things happen. So, much better.

Is it difficult to be in a Christian metal band and be successful in Finland?

I don't think it is too difficult, it just takes a lot of work. It is hard of course to be a hit on the metal markets, as there are a lot of competent bands, but on the other hand if the band's stuff is good, there's nothing to worry about.

Has Immortal Souls ever been persecuted because of its spiritual beliefs?

There are always some kind of difficulties in band life and performing, but nothing spiritual related that I would call persecution. We are primarily a metal band; we come to play a full load metal show. People that come to our shows want to be entertained, and that's

how to do it differently. I like to tell stories of everyday life shrouded in shadows, but mainly I love to use winter metaphors.

One of your most popular songs is "Christ Mass" from the *Divine Wintertime* EP. What about this sacred holiday led the band to write a song about it?

I had the idea for the text long before the song was written. I played with the words and came up with the idea of doing a fast and angry Christmas song. The idea was hilarious and I was surprised that it actually worked. I loved to write the text in a manner of an old traditional Christmas hymn, and then pound that in. It was great! Furthermore, I love Christmas time, being with family and taking it easy for a few days. It is my favorite time of year.

Which Immortal Souls songs have the most meaning to you or are your favorite, and why?

It usually goes that what I have done last is the one closest to me. On the compilation the second of the new songs, "Down in My Grave", is one I've been listening to now, as it is a bit different, almost a blues song. The song was written for Ice Upon the Night, but was left out as it was too different for the album. I'm happy we got it out there.

Are you happy with your album distribution in Europe, the U.S., etc.?

I am happy for now, but hope for better distribution in the future. There is good news coming all the time about the distribution and I am confident that things will get better. We have great distribution in Holland, Belgium and Germany, where the label Fear Dark is working hard to promote our stuff. There is always a possibility to make things better.

Swedish and Finnish melodic metal has been the motor for our present style. We started with doom oriented music in the beginning, but have found our style of metal here. On the compilation there are a few old doom songs and as I listen to them now quite gloomy stuff.

The band has been around for about 10 years now. Looking back, did you think you would still be making this type of music? Any surprises along the way?

I try to live day by day, but when we started this I had no idea that 10 years later we would still be here. We have been quite a lazy group at times, so we are fortunate to have good label contacts that have been kicking us forward.. There has been some times that we do nothing for the band, then a lot of gigs, rehearsals and recordings, and again a few months holiday. It works for us this way. We could never work full-time with this band, the pauses are needed.

Since the band is not a full-time endeavor for the members, what type of work does each band member do to earn a living?

We do engineering, process and leadership work in different companies.

If you were to set three goals that you would like the band to accomplish over the next few years, what would they be?

1. The U.S. tour, 2. Record the new album and 3. A gig opening for some really big name. There is lot of work to get these done.

If you had your choice, which bands would you like to open for and why?

Bands like Slipknot or Dark Tranquillity. That would be fun to see what their fans would like of us.

IMMORTAL SOULS



Many people refer to your music as melodic death metal. No matter how the music is technically defined, its melodic nature seems to fit well with the use of both clean and death-style vocals, which worked very well on the song "Man of Sorrow". Do you have any plans to use clean vocals on the next album?

We have plans of using these same kind of elements again on the new album and we are working on how to evolve them more. There were a lot of comments for and against the use of clean vocals—they did not leave anyone cold. We'll see how the music on the new album is defined. We are now making the arrangements for 10 songs, and the recordings are planned to take place this winter. The album is already named *Wintereich*.

You mentioned that the song "Down in My Grave" was originally written for the album *Ice Upon the Night*. Does this song and the other new song, "Painweighted," represent the future musical direction of the band? If not, what can listeners expect to hear on *Wintereich*?

"Painweighted" is closer to our new stuff. There are similar elements in a few other songs on the new album. "Down in My Grave" is a lot more effective and a better version here than it was during the *Ice Upon the Night* sessions. I am pleased that we passed on it then.

In closing, do you have anything you would like to say to the readers of *Heaven's Metal*?

Thank You! Check our website, immortalsouls.com, the resource for information, mp3s, tabs and lyrics!

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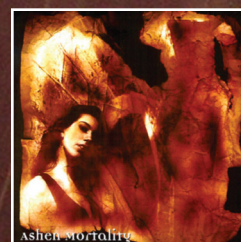
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What Porcupine Tree Says

One thing that's always been cool about prog-rock is that musicianship is at a premium. And, for better or worse, the lyricists are often "thinking" men that put something beyond being shaken all night long or other such dribble into their songs. The prog-rock bands that "make it," however, always have one element going for them – a good vocalist. Such is the case with one Porcupine Tree, who now release albums with a little Lava Records logo on them. "Listen" in as editor DVP talks with vocalist/multi-instrumentalist Steven Wilson.

Let start off talking about Michael Schenker & UFO...
(Sounding somewhat surprised) Okay.

What are your impressions of his playing and what's his best work he's done with the band?
I'm a very recent convert to that band, I only really discovered them through the live album, *Strangers in the Night*.

Yeah, brilliant.

Very recently, well in the beginning of the year actually, and it was a guy at the German record label who got me into them. So I don't have a great deal of context for his work, I just know it's wonderful on the album. You can perhaps recommend me where to go next.

Well you started at the best; it kinda goes downhill from there.

Well that's kinda what he told me. He's says, "This is Michael Schenker's finest hour and all you need is here, so I picked it up and I was suitably blown away, but I haven't summed up the enthusiasm to investigate further yet.

You've got some UFO studio albums like *Obsessions* and *Lights Out*.

Yeah but there's a lot of stuff from those albums on this live album isn't there?

Yeah, yeah. You're getting the best.

Probably the definitive versions, that's what everyone tells me.

There's a couple songs like, "Looking Out for #1" and the reprise for that, and a couple of the really beautiful songs he's done in the studio with them. He did a double live album for his group, MSG a few years later that's pretty good, but I don't listen to that anymore and I always come back to this UFO album.

Yeah, it's fantastic, I loved it.

Yeah, me too. Let's move on to heavy metal. In your opinion, what are some of the best moments in the history of metal, or the best parts about metal from your perspective.

Well, I'd have to ask you to define metal, because are we talking about metal in terms of everything from Led Zeppelin and Black Sabbath onwards or are you being more specific like the kind of Iron Maiden or are you being even more specific in just talking about death metal and thrash metal? Metal is such a vague term to me now, I'm not quite sure. People say the UFO album is heavy metal?

Yeah, it sounds like from what your saying that we kinda think the same, cause I kinda start my definition of metal with Black Sabbath, Led Zeppelin, Jimi Hendrix and move on from there.

Yeah, Blue Cheer, there's loads of bands that

kinda have a very strong metallic aspect. King Crimson, Mahavishnu Orchestra – there's extreme elements of what you might term "metallic guitar playing" – very aggressive, very a-tonal, riff-orientated guitar playing. I don't know. In my life, there has been several landmark moments that have been related to metal. The first music I think I ever really became obsessive about was the new wave of British heavy metal, which, because of my age and the time I was growing up – through the early 80's – was perfectly timed to my kind of rebellion music, the music I was going to use to define my personality and rebel against my parents and everyone else, all my friends that were listening to pop. New wave British heavy metal was just right there at the right time, 80 to 81... I was, like, 11 or 12 years old or whatever age I was, and bands like Diamondhead, Saxon, Maiden, Vardis – you know, a lot of the other bands that had been forgotten now from that era – made a very strong impact on me. In fact, the first band I formed at school was kinda like a new wave of British heavy metal inspired band. Then another landmark for me was much more recently, four or five years ago, almost rediscovering that kind of whole thing, having kind of banished it from my life for many, many years on the basis that it was some kind of adolescent thing that I had out-grown. And then, kinda rediscovering the greatness and power of great metal. I think the catalyst for that for me was discovering the underground bands, because for a long time, metal music for me kinda meant... You know, in the 80s you had the kinda hair metal bands, then you kinda had the post-Seattle bands of the 90s, then you kinda had the nu-metal bands, none of whom really touched me. When I discovered the underground metal scene, with Swedish bands... That's when I became really obsessive about it again. That's when it began to have a strong effect on my writing again. Bands like Meshuggah, Opeth, some of the doom-metal bands – they really had a strong impact on me again and it's almost like I've come full circle in that 20 year hiatus if you like.

How does it feel to be taken seriously as a musician?

It feels good. I mean, it's important to me that the band has somehow carved out a place in history. I was talking a little bit earlier about generic music. I think the problem with most generic music is that it can be very successful and in fact it's more easy to be successful playing generic music. If you play a music that is already established, that already has a demographic and fan base, it's much easier to get your foot in the door and to get a start, look at all the bands that came through in wake of Nirvana, you look at all the bands that came through in the wake of Korn and the nu-metal bands, all sounding virtually the same as each other and almost it seemed to me, getting huge record deals and having huge albums. But how quickly time has forgotten those bands, I mean who really listens to Papa Roach anymore and who listens to the third rate grunge bands?

For me it's more important to do things the hard way and I think Porcupine Tree has done things the hard way. We've never been part of the scene, we've never played music which has been easy to market but it's important to me that people now do take us seriously. I think as a band we're the past and the future and something that people will still be listening to, hopefully, in 10, 20, 50, 100 years' time. That actually is more important to me than to be taken seriously as a musician – is that people will still be listening to those records and that Porcupine Tree is something that people can only talk of in terms of itself if, you know what I mean? So, we're not part of the scene. We don't play this kind of music. We don't play that kind of music, we play Porcupine Tree kind of music and I think we have achieved that. That for me is very gratifying.

Cool. What do you think of Jesus Christ?

Umm, the concept of the human being? The thing is, I'm not religious. I don't believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. I don't even believe Jesus Christ said he was the Son of God. I think that the history of the Bible and the history of religion has been one of power, corruption, and politics. It's all about people manipulating and interpreting things in order to create a power structure and power over other human beings. I believe Jesus Christ existed. I believe He was a very good man and taught very important lessons. I don't believe He ever said He was the Son of God. I don't believe He was. I don't believe in God. At least in God, but I believe in God as a force within us all. Just in the same way that I believe Satan is a force within us all. I think the whole concept of religion is something man has invented to cope with the knowledge of his own impending death. It's a very hard thing to accept that you are going to die one day and this life is all you've got and you have to somehow make the best of it. If you're not having a good time, you're not happy, you're not enjoying yourself, it's a very hard thing to accept and to come to terms with. So, I think what's happened gradually over the centuries is that man has developed this myth of God and afterlife, somehow somebody watching over them, to somehow make it easier for them to accept the cruel reality that there is nothing after this. We are some kind of freak accident in time and space that we are aware of our own existence. That, unfortunately, is the way I look at things. I just believe you have to make the most of your life, try to be a good person, try to be a spiritual person. So, to answer your question, I believe that Jesus Christ was someone who figured this out, and tried to teach people to live in a spiritual way and to find happiness within themselves and in their life. That's the way I feel about music as well. Music is obviously a part of that. For me it's a big part.

Interesting. I've got a question that challenges one of the statements you made. If gradually over time, through the centuries, man has manipulated the text and created the myth

of Christ as the Son of God, why did twelve disciples die for that belief? Why would anyone die for something they made up or connived or come up with a conspiracy to have power over the masses? Why would twelve guys go to their deaths for it?

You've asked the question why. You could apply that question to the whole concept of life. Why are we here? They aren't the only twelve guys in history who have died for their beliefs. There are thousands of people dying everyday. Look at what's going on in Israel right now, with the Palestinians. Hopefully, it's on the road to recovery now. For 50 years, Palestinians have been blowing themselves up for some kind of holy crusade, some holy war. That for me seems absurd. I would be prepared to die for things that some people would think also are absurd. I'm prepared to die

that are parts of the Bible that have gradually been suppressed and removed by the political hierarchy of the church. And unfortunately been the whole history of religion. It's been the Church basically deciding on how we interpret the lessons of Jesus Christ and how we interpret the Bible. When I read the Bible, for me it's obvious that it's a metaphor. It's not suppose to be taken literally. It seems so ridiculous to me that anyone would take the story of creation, for example, literally, that God created the world in seven days. It seems absurd to me that anyone would take it literally, but people do. To me it's so obviously a metaphor. There are writers all over the world everyday writing in metaphor. It seems absurd to me that 2,000 years from now, someone will pick up a copy of Dan Brown's, *The Divinci Code* and suddenly start preaching to people as that is all fact. It's a piece of fiction. And in

"I don't even believe Jesus Christ said he was the Son of God."

to save music, to save art; and some people think that's absurd. So, in that sense, we're all slaves to our own personal obsessions and our own belief systems. And the human mind is a very strange thing, it's very easy to be brainwashed, to become obsessive and see things in a very distorted way. I mean, it's all around us all the time. It's sad, but true, we are kind of a very imperfect organism, very prone to these misconceptions, misapprehensions, and distortions of reality. I just think the twelve Disciples of Christ were just the first twelve of many millions that have followed that have died for something that I personally, don't believe in. And I'm not going to go and persuade people that I'm right. This is just what I believe. I believe I'm right, just the way they believe they're right.

It's refreshing to talk to somebody who's put some thought into this. It seems kind of odd that, although there would be a conspiracy theory of trying to gain power...

I don't know how much you were aware. But the Bible originally – the New Testament particularly – used to have a lot of other material in it. They were subsequently removed. The books from the New Testament that were removed, in particular the Gospel according to Saint Thomas was removed in about 200 or 300 A.D. by a group of people by the Nicene Council, which was basically the leaders of the church. And they removed that book from the New Testament, basically wrote (it) out of history, for all intents and purposes, because it challenged the notion of the Church, it challenged the political power-structure of the Church. It basically said, that you should find your own spiritual path and you should never listen to anyone else, and accept guidance from anyone else. Spirituality is something that you have to find within yourself. And they didn't like that, so they removed that stuff and that's why we have the Gnostic gospels today

some respects I do view the Bible as the greatest work of fiction of all time. It's a wonderful piece of work. But it's a piece of fiction. It's ridiculous to me that people take it as literally as the gospel.

It's interesting that there can be another take on the Gospels and the selection of the Nicene meeting, as taking that Gospel, it doesn't fit the other Gospels in a sense that it might contradict itself or contradicts those other Gospels in the other ones...

Well, even the four gospels in the New Testament contradict each other. They're all supposedly telling the same story; but actually, if you read them, back-to-back, they all have a very different perspective on things and contradict each other. It's almost a paradox that they are called the "Gospels." It's almost a contradiction that all four of them can be the Gospel, because they contradict each other. So therefore, it's not possible that they can all be the Gospel of Truth. So, in that sense, they are interpretations, they are metaphorical, they are all seen through the eyes of someone writing, and in the case of the New Testament written 150, 200 years after the so-called events that they are suppose to be portraying. It's a fascinating story. You can tell I have read a lot about the whole history of the Bible, because I got fed up with not being able to argue my point to people who tried to convince me. So, I actually looked into it a lot and there is so much information that basically challenges the whole myth of Christianity, the whole myth of religion. Not just Christianity, but all faiths. They're all (bleep)ed up, they are all kind of hodge-podges of politics, power games... They borrow from each other liberally and it's so sad to me that so many people are not prepared to scratch below the surface and find this out for themselves. I think because basically people are afraid. Ultimately, if you challenge faith, you're wasting your time, you

Drottnar

INTERVIEW BY ED HELLIG

Norwegian black metal extremists Drottnar have graced us with the brutality of their sound for close to a decade. In a promising career, their sound has evolved from the early Viking-influenced black metal of the Vitality years (1997 demo Vitality, and later already as Drottnar in A White Realm – 1998 and Spiritual Battle – 2000), in favor of a more technical approach (Anamorphosis – 2003). The present line-up consists of Sven-Erik Lind (vocals), Karl-Fredrik Lind (guitar), Bengt Olsson (guitar), Havar Wormdahl (bass), and Glenn-David Lind (drums).

The band is getting ready to perform at the 3-day long amazing Nordic Fest in the month of November, alongside some of the greatest names in Christian metal, like Crimson Moonlight, Divine Fire, Frosthardt, and Crimson Thorn. In the interim, I had the chance to catch up with Karl about the past and current status of the Christian black metal scene.

In your point of view, what is the state of the extreme Christian metal scene – and more precisely black metal?

Contrary to some years ago, many Christian metal bands are well established and deliver good music in today's scene. The founding bands, like Antestor, Drottnar and Crimson Moonlight have all released strong and quality releases. Our band is soon to release a truly groundbreaking album, both to the Christian scene as well as the secular. We will stand out as an even more original and respected band with this release, which is highly deserved. Many bands within the scene deserve more attention and respect, and as Christians we often have to prove that we deserve to get the same attention as many other bands that are much weaker and produce less quality music than we do. However, what might be a trend within the Christian metal scene of today is that it is blending more with the scene

in general, and is not as separated from the secular scene as it was some years ago. This is very good, and the way it should be – without forgetting our beliefs and who we are, of course. Also, many bands from the Christian scene produce music of such high quality standards that they attract attention worldwide, on a far broader platform than earlier.

Would it be correct to conclude that Christian black metal is finally achieving a certain amount of maturity, ten years after the release of Horde's Hellig Usvart?

The scene I know, and the scene Drottnar has belonged to through the years has developed independently of Horde and the Christian black metal hype coming along with it. We had our own bands and our own scene not very influenced by this, and also being established before this release. So, Horde is not really a proper or good reference point to the

Norwegian or Scandinavian scene. However, I feel the scene over here has been mature for many, many years and mainly consists of hard-working and serious bands that produce quality metal.

The black metal camp in both the secular and Christian arenas seems to be divided in two factions: on one hand, there are those who believe that black metal, as an extreme expression of art, is not simply music, but also a lifestyle devoted to all things dark and melancholy; on the other hand, those who believe that black metal is a music style that co-exists independent of this or that philosophy or religious inclination. Are you partial to any of those two sides, and why?

I respect people that are devoted to their music, and express their inner beliefs and opinions through their art. That's what we do as well. Often, this results in that the music you create and your own self are not that separated and different. However, most write their lyrics out of image and some sort of fascination for things. And since people tend to be sheep, most write the same things as everyone else do within the black metal scene, about evil and darkness. I cannot respect that, and it cannot be regarded as a lifestyle either.

A prominent extreme metal media outlet posed the question recently (and I paraphrase): 'is it possible that Christianity has a dark side that incites Christian metalheads to seek black metal as an idiosyncratic source of catharsis?' What would it be your answer to that question?

which is necessary for the genre in order to not be merely repetitive and boring. We do not need another (old) Mayhem or Darkthrone. People must dare to come up with something different, but of course keep some of the same elements that created this genre. Frosthardr is another band that

"Except for Christ, everything else has a dark side."

What can I say... Except for Christ, everything else has a dark side.

The black metal scene in general gives the impression of going into a process of regression, devolving itself into a harsher, grim, 'retro' style of playing. Bands like Leviathan, Xasthur, and Tsjuder, are some of the proponents of this 'new wave' of the more purist necro sound made infamous by the likes of Darkthrone and Mayhem. Do you see Christian extreme metal following this trend, or do you foresee something (sonically and aesthetically) completely and defiantly different?

Drottnar has always kept the harsh and grim feeling to the music, lately combining it with technical skills and new thinking;

stays within the frames of grim, old-school BM, but manages to create something new and different. That is good! Really, I do not see the Christian BM scene evolving into old-school BM and I hope it won't. Elements of old-school can be interesting, but another pure old-school band does not bring anything to the scene at all. That counts for both the Christian and the secular scene. It is time to create something new. Drottnar managed to do this with the upcoming release; a harsh and grim old-school nerve mixed with a killer technical edge.

✕



ALBUM REVIEWS



DESYRE

HAIR METAL MADNESS

A throwback to the heyday of hair, Desyre arrive on the scene with a five-song demo establishing them as the prettiest boys around... Well, they do have a lady in the band, too. This is their first effort and it shows. Vocally it's just not as strong as it needs to be.

[Glam Nation Records] Mike Larson



SE7ENTH SEAL

S/T

This nu metal release has 10 solid songs done with enough variety to keep you interested. I will be honest, I usually pass on this kind of stuff, but found myself hitting repeat on the player. They season their songs with a variety of influences, from Metallica to P.O.D. to Disturbed. They may not be the most innovative band around; but, honestly, they can write a good tune. [Indie] Mike Larson



GLOBAL WARNING

ENEMY WITHIN

Playing a brand of alternative metal with a gritty and sludgy feel, the Pacific Northwest's Global Warning hit us with a slab of mid-paced, commercially heavy tunes. You can hear many different influences throughout the disc, but the most prevailing would be the Godsmack style vocals, though from time to time they will have more of a classic metal feel to them. [Indie] Mike Larson



SERVANTHOOD

VOX DEI

Servanthood appears to be a band that embraces their influences. I really was digging this album for the first few tunes. The recording is adequate enough and the songs had some interesting aspects, jumping from metal to core to classical and

back again. But, as the album progressed, they included some clean vocals that rubbed me the wrong way. This band has true potential, I just think they need to focus their sound a bit more. [Indie] Mike Larson



FASEDOWN

BLITZ OF ANGUISH

Musically, this band is top notch metalcore, taking what they like from the heavier genres and bludgeoning the listener into submission. With *Blitz of Anguish*, Fasedown have set aside the clear Pantera comparisons and broadened their sound a touch. Opting for speed at times where they would have had a breakdown before; and the singer's voice seems to be a touch more aggressive. Overall, this album has some well-written songs, and the production is great. [Indie] Mike Larson

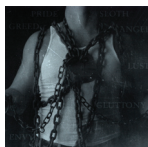


SHEEP

DEMO

The former frontman for Metanoia is back with a new project. This four-song demo shows tons of promise. By mixing in elements of thrash and death metal and mixing it with some of the groove of the nu-metal, they have come up with an interesting product. Vocally this is exactly the same as Metanoia was, but song-wise this seems to have stepped up a notch.

[Indie] Mike Larson



THE MERCY

ENSLAVED

Modern metal band The Mercy might actually have a solid future ahead of them. This band has some great harmonies, good guitar playing, and some pretty darned good songwriting. Seriously, this band could really establish themselves if they try, I think that it is just a matter of working out the minor issues. This is a good album, and there is a great cover of a Stryper song! [Indie] Mike Larson



ENDURETH

UNTO THE END

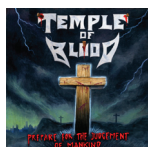
Containing elements of classic, progressive and power metal, Endureth have really put together some good music on this album. The songs are strong and the guitarists can play, even the recording is well done. The only drawback here for me is the vocals. Just not my cup of tea, I guess. [Indie] Mike Larson



MINDSIZE

DEMO

Aggressive metalcore band Mindsize's four-song demo is pretty good. I didn't find anything innovative or cutting edge, but still a solid recording. My thought is that if they could push themselves in the riff department, then they would bring this to the next level! [Indie] Mike Larson



TEMPLE OF BLOOD

PREPARE FOR THE JUDGMENT OF MANKIND

I found myself truly enjoying this disc. It's a bit of a speed metal/thrash hybrid with vocals that utilize some falsetto-style singing. I like this disc a whole lot, the guitar riffs are fun, the music is intense and, with the exception of a couple lackluster tunes, the songs on here just crush. [Indie] Mike Larson



SEVENTH ANGEL

HEED THE WARNING & LIVE RECORDINGS

Here is a special treat for Seventh Angel fans: the *Heed the Warning* demo and some live tracks from 1992 on one CD. Compared to the original cassette demo, the songs here sound a bit crisper and have good production overall ... as demo production goes. The sound quality of the live tracks is below average, but they are fun to hear, nonetheless. Don't own any Seventh Angel?

Start elsewhere. Followers of the band, however, will love this. [Bombworks] Chris Beck



HOLY BLOOD

WAVES ARE DANCING

Waves is the second album from this five piece from the Ukraine, a follow-up to *The Wanderer* that has a better sound and better songs than their debut. Folk metal as much as it is black metal, the flute and keyboards are used in abundance, resulting in a unique yet delightful sound when combined with the black metal screams and group chants. Standout tracks include "To Heaven" and "The Spring," where the music achieves a perfect balance of brutality and serenity. *Waves'* production is high quality; the album is a delight to listen to with headphones due to the clear channel separation of the different instruments. The latest edition of this album from Bombworks includes a video to "The Spring." Overall, the professional nature of this album was a pleasant surprise. If you're looking for something different in your metal, this is it! [Bombworks] Chris Beck



FEARFUL SYMMETRY

A LOSS OF BALANCE

This album sees Jimmy P. Brown, of Deliverance fame, doing something different than what fans would expect from one of the pioneers of Christian speed metal. But, with that, this album pushes what he did on *Assimilation*. Gone are the guitars, which are replaced by an almost techno synthesized sound. This is not my thing, but fans of *Assimilation* might want to check this one out. [PsychoAcoustix] Daniel Jesse



VM SON

This seems to be an attempt to produce a more industrial album, and does not fall into what is traditionally called metal, or even extreme. Why I say, "attempt,"

is because the programmed sounds do not have enough of a 'bite' to them. There are some songs that do have the traditional guitar, but this album tends to stay in the world of almost techno. [Psychoacoustix] Daniel Jesse



THE WORLD BLACK BROKEN

It seems like the majority of bands on PsychoAcoustix fall halfway between techno and industrial. This is no different. Though it seems like the men behind this cd have a little more creative and better ideas on how to do this. And, I think I would enjoy this disc if they just made it sound harsh and cold like it seems it was meant to be. [Psychoacoustix] Daniel Jesse



REVELATION PROJECT

S/T

Revelation Project is doing what Saviour Machine famously did – tackling the apocalyptic subject matter, but this is not near gothicly-tinged metal. It is a foray into progressive metal/rock, which fits a concept album quite nicely. This does have some moments reminiscent of Dream Theater musically, and has good male and female vocals. There is a good amount of variety, and if you don't mind the subject matter, than this disc is for most prog/power fans. [Indie] Daniel Jesse



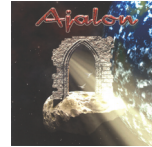
DEMON HUNTER THE TRIPTYCH

While some might accuse them of ripping off Slipknot, this intensely great band are anything but trend-chasers. They've found a great formula (marrying intensity with melody) and seem to be sticking with it. The band's third album finds them firing on all cylinders, which continues the direction of *Summer Of Darkness*. They even cover one of the best songs of the 90s, Prong's "Snap Your Fingers, Snap Your Neck." [Solid State] Doug Van Pelt



ALETHEIAN DYING VINE

This technical progressive melodic death metal band has put out an amazing release with their third album, *Dying Vine*. I had heard of Aletheian before, but hadn't really given them much of a chance. To be honest, I never really gave their second album, *Apolutrosis*, much of a chance. Though I did like their first release *Hope Prevails...*, which they released under the name Crutch originally, but I had thought something had changed when they dropped the Crutch name and became Aletheian and I had partially written them off. Boy was that a mistake. Well, *Dying Vine* blindsided me, the music on this disc is simply just a pleasure to listen too, at times reminding me of bands like Extol and Death, while still retaining the Aletheian sound. The guitar work on this album is top-notch with great riffs and some classic solos and the vocals, though hard to hear due to the mix, are performed excellently. The thing I find myself enjoying the most is the drumming. Joe Walmer doesn't seem bent on being the main attraction by any means, but his parts are so well organized and complimentary that they just shine. Production-wise this album is stellar (with the exception of the vocals being mixed a touch low... I had to turn it up quite loud to hear everything that was going on). Now the packaging is laid out nicely, with some interesting cover art. For a DIY release this is done quite excellently. [Hope Prevails] Mike Larson

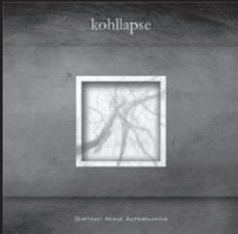


AJALON ON THE THRESHOLD OF ETERNITY

Randy George, often seen and heard playing with the great Neal Morse, has his own high-quality band – Ajalon. Beautiful strumming guitars, clean sweeping musical landscapes (begging for a movie score), and precise instrumentation form a solid foundation for that v.i.p. element for commercial (and widespread) prog rock appeal – great vocals. Wil Henderson scores high in that department. [Threshing Floor] Doug VanPelt



Kohllapse - Distant Mind Alternative



Flawlessly combining doom/death metal with gothic, industrial and progressive influences.

"This is a breathtaking disc that deserves to be heard again."
- The Whipping Post

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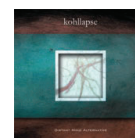
PALE HORSE
UNTIL THE LAST
SEAL IS OPENED
Bombworks is
now famous in the
Christian scene

for re-releasing old material that younger fans most likely missed. This is what this disc is: a collection of three demos put together. This is nice, because you can see the artistic vision coming into shape. As for the music, this is death metal that reminds me of Obituary. It is heavy plodding death metal, that sometimes speeds into a thrash metal mode, and sometimes slows down to more of a doom feel. *Until the Last Seal is Opened* sounds like it was recorded in the mid-90s, so the production is not crystal clear, and some people might think that it sounds a little dated, but with all that said, I find this to be a good album to put on, sit back, relax, and let the memories of a passed era come flooding back. [Bombworks] Daniel Jesse



PINKEYE D'GEKKO
DRY CLOTHES
FOR THE DROWNING
Quite a surprise
comes roaring
out of St. Louis,

Missouri, with a 70s style boogie rock slab of a dozen tunes that even includes some snazzy Terry Taylor/DA witty 'n' soft tunes, like "The Velvet Fizz." Solid enough to land them a gig touring with Skynyrd, but possibly too basic or old school for the NWOBHM and beyond metalheads. [Force MP] Doug Van Pelt



KOHLAPSE
DISTANT MIND
ALTERNATIVE
I've long dug this
skillful musician's
one-man take on

dark, doomy industrial metal. This re-release is ultra-clean and a pleasant listen. Ro Edwards crafts long, majestic songs with catchy hooks and riffs. Nice. [Soundmass] DVP

Surf this: bombworksrecords.com, pdgrocks.com, soundmass.com

What Porcupine Tree Says | cont'd

can't do it. If I try to explain to someone who is a devout Christian all of this that I am telling you now, he or she will say to me, "Man, you have to have faith." It's the ultimate get-out clause. You can't argue with me, because I have faith and you don't. It's such (bleep).

Just as a side note. I am satisfied intellectually. I've been to college and I've taken comparative religion courses and I've done a lot of reading myself. I am intellectually satisfied with the Gospels. You and I would disagree on what we think is the truth and what are historical documents and what aren't, but I agree with you that you need to get below the surface, you need to ask questions, I just happen to conclude that I think the story of Christianity can stand up to criticism.

Listen, I just said to you that I think the Bible is a wonderful piece of work and I think it teaches many, many, many important things about how to live our life in a spiritual good way. But I believe that's all it was ever intended to. I don't believe it was ever intend to be taken as fact, as Gospel. The people who wrote the Bible were trying to teach us how to live our life in a spiritual way. The problem is, of course, if 2,000 years ago, we had the media, we probably would have understood a lot more about what in the Bible is based on facts and what is based on fiction or metaphor. But, of course, we don't and so the message has been passed down through centuries in a very inefficient way, almost like Chinese whispers and it's very easy now to pick holes in it and see that some of it is not supposed to be taken literally. And I'm certainly not trying to denigrate the

message of the Bible at all, or the message of Christianity at all. It just annoys me that so many people don't question more what they're hearing and what they're learning.

I am with you there. Questioning is a good thing. The music of Porcupine Tree, if I can define it, one of the aspects of it or characteristics would be "thinking man's music." So, that being the case, what do you think of mindless rock?

Mindless rock being what?

Well, let's just throw out AC/DC...

Yeah, I love AC/DC. I think the whole thing about music is that music that is entirely cerebral is almost worthless to me. I can think of some examples of music that I think are very technical, very cerebral, but there is something about music that is very primal, and I think bands like AC/DC really tap into that. And that whole new wave of British heavy metal thing. There's actually a kind of spirit and a feeling in simplicity and tapping into something without letting your brain and your intellect get in the way of that. And I like to think we have got that, too, you know. We do think very hard about the music and some of it is kinda complicated and some of the production is clever in a way, but at the same time we try to write great songs – songs that have simplicity, songs that kinda have a soul, a heart. And in that retaining their rock 'n' roll feeling – that rock 'n' roll kind of spirit. Absolutely, I love that as much as anyone. 'Mindless music,' as you call it. The thing is there is good and bad in everything. There is some very bad mindless music and there is some fantastic mindless music. There is very bad so-called intelligent music and there's very good intelligent...

I don't necessarily think the two are mutually exclusive or have any more claim to superiority than the other.

What's your opinion of the quantity of atmospheric bands making music today, like Radiohead, Coldplay, Muse?

I really like it. Obviously, in a way, I've been doing (it) for longer than (these) guys have. I started making music, not dissimilar, but obviously with its own kind of direction, but I started to do that in the late 80s and, at that time, no one was doing that. In the late 80s going into the early 90s, it was all about grunge and it was all about the suppression of the guitar solo, and atmosphere and ambition and all that stuff kinda really went out the window. It was a dirty word for a long time to be ambitious and produce records. So, I am really happy *that* has come back. I think it's more important that it's the ambition that's important. You can still write simple songs, but you can try to realize them in a more ambitious way again now. I think you just couldn't do that for a long time – between, say punk rock and the bands you're talking about. Ambition and wanting to use the studio in a kind of creative way was kind of frowned upon a lot. And again, I think of the golden era of music and what people like Brian Wilson and McCartney & Lennon were doing and Pink Floyd and Led Zeppelin and Robert Fripp with King Crimson and what those guys were doing in the studio was amazing. And it's so gratifying to me that those bands now have put that approach to making records back on the map. I guess I hope that Porcupine Tree have in their own way played a part in that too.



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WHEN YOU WISH UPON A STAR...

who can save us?

who can we depend on?

is there anyone who won't fall?

what is his name, that i might worship him?